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General Assembly

FORTY-FIFTH SESSION

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FIRST COMMITTEE
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held on
Wednesday, 21 November 1990
at 10.30 a.m.
New York

VERBATIM RECORD OF THE 43rd MEETING

Chairman: Mr. Rana (Nepal)

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The meeting was called to order at 11 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 67 (continued)

QUESTION OF ANTARCTICA: GENERAL DEBATE, CONSIDERATION OF AND ACTION ON DRAFT RESOLUTIONS

The CHAIRMAN: Members may recall that according to the programme of work the Committee should have completed its consideration of item 67 this morning. However, a number of delegations have informed me that intensive consultations are still going on with regard to draft resolutions A/C.1/45/L.63/Rev.1 and A/C.1/45/L.64. Moreover, time will be needed to explore the possibility of any programme budget implications and of oral statements concerning draft resolution A/C.1/45/L.63/Rev.1 by the Secretariat. Taking these developments into account, I propose that we complete the general debate this morning - we have only three names left on the list of speakers - and take action on the two draft resolutions on Monday.

If the Committee agrees, it will be so decided.

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT: The first speaker this morning is the representative of Kenya.

Mr. AMBEYI-LIGABO (Kenya): The Antarctic region, with more than 5 million square miles surrounding the South Pole is, after space, the most isolated region and humanity's last unexplored frontier. It holds about 70 per cent of the world's available freshwater resources and comprises approximately 10 per cent of the earth's surface. Its land appears only where the 15,000-foot peaks of mountain ranges break through the ice. As a result of its peculiar polar location, the bulk of its ice mass and the huge extent of the surrounding seas, the continent exerts a fundamental influence on the atmosphere, oceans and the biological conditions of the entire globe.

(Mr. Ambeyi-Ligabo, Kenya)

This region, because of its value for scientific research and co-operation and, especially, its location and ecosystem, as mentioned earlier, is of such great importance to the entire community of nations that it is truly unfair for its management to remain in the hands of an exclusive club of a few rich nations. How can one explain and understand the paradox whereby on the one hand the death of the cold war and the beginning of a new era of co-operation in international relations are proclaimed and on the other hand we are told that the United Nations should have nothing to do with the Antarctic region?

It is on record that since 1983 Kenya has addressed itself to this subject and questioned the scope of obligations and undertakings under the 1959 Antarctic Treaty. We recognize that the Treaty, among other things, prohibits any measures of a military nature and imposes a ban on nuclear explosions, whatever their nature, as well as on the disposal of radioactive waste material. This gives the region appreciably important demilitarized status.

However, my delegation has major difficulties: first, with the rule that the ability to conduct scientific research in Antarctica is a strict prerequisite for accession to the Treaty; secondly, with the non-democratic decision-making process over issues pertaining to Antarctica; thirdly, with the refusal of the Treaty parties to engage in negotiations on a universalized mechanism that would enable all nations to share the benefits derived from Antarctica both now and in the future; and, fourthly and finally, with the total disregard of United Nations resolutions calling on the Consultative Parties to the Antarctic Treaty to invite the Secretary-General of the United Nations to attend their meetings.

Given that the present Treaty has these major flaws, my delegation does not believe that the interests of all mankind in Antarctica can best be served by making the management of the area the exclusive right of a few rich nations. It is

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(Mr. Ambeyi-Ligabo, Kenya)

therefore Kenya's strong belief that the management of Antarctica should be universalized, since the region is, in truth, the common heritage of mankind. The current exclusive and discriminatory arrangement, which puts the fate of Antarctica and, consequently, of the world community in the hands of the 25 Consultative Parties to the Antarctic Treaty, is unacceptable and repugnant to the ideals and principles of the Charter of the United Nations.

The impact of human encroachment and oil spills on the Antarctic ecosystem cannot be overemphasized. The number of stations has increased significantly. There were 34 stations in 1983 and at present there are more than 57 stations, operated by 20 nations. Many of these stations are merely involved in duplication of research. The only way to stop the establishment of more stations by nations seeking decision-making status under the Treaty is to establish an international scientific station that would make it unnecessary to duplicate research, but would help in the drawing up of scientific priorities. In this case, duplication of logistical or other infrastructural requirements needed to establish national stations would be rendered unnecessary.

Another question relating to a permanent ban on mining and prospecting in Antarctica and its surrounding areas is of great interest to my delegation. Accordingly, we welcomed most warmly the opposition to the Antarctic minerals Convention announced in May 1989 by Australia, which was later joined by France and New Zealand, and supported by Italy and Belgium through the enactment of domestic legislation.

It is also noteworthy and gratifying that the international community is becoming increasingly aware of the environmental degradation in Antarctica and its harmful impact on the global environment. The Preparatory Committee for the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, which met in Nairobi in

(Mr. Ambeyi-Ligabo, Kenya)

August 1990, has added a new dimension and an impetus to our call to preserve Antarctica as a nature reserve and a world park. We hope that this positive approach to halting environmental degradation in Antarctica will be pursued vigorously within the framework of the forthcoming United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, to be held in Brazil in 1992.

In Europe there have been unprecedented political changes which only a few years ago nobody had ever thought of and which were, indeed, unimaginable. On the basis of these changes, Kenya sincerely believes that the few nations that have arrogated to themselves power and exclusive rights over the Antarctic region will, sooner rather than later and owing to immense international pressure and national pressure within those countries themselves, see reason and bow to global realities.

On 19 July 1990, Mr. Curtis Bohlen, Assistant Secretary of State for Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs, in his testimony before the Sub-Committee on Human Rights and International Organizations of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the United States House of Representatives, said:

> "The Washington Administration is mindful of the concerns that are being raised about the potential impact of mining on the Antarctic environment. We are consulting with other countries to find a solution that could re-establish a consensus among all parties on this issue."

(Mr. Ambeyi-Ligabo, Kenya)

While we appreciate the fact that the concerns of the community of nations have at last reached the ears of the most powerful administration of the world, Kenya does not share the view or conclusion that re-establishment of an already broken consensus among Antarctic Treaty Parties is a solution to the problem of environmental degradation in Antarctica.

Kenya believes that the solution to the environment problems in Antarctica can be found only through a comprehensive environment convention on the conservation and protection of Antarctica and its ecosystems and the establishment of a nature reserve or a world park - all within the framework of the United Nations.

Another issue which is of great concern to my delegation is the question of South Africa. The pillars of apartheid are still solidly intact and therefore, as an African delegation, we cannot remain indifferent to the continued participation of the racist Pretoria régime in Antarctic Treaty meetings and activities.

The time has come for the Antarctic Treaty Parties, the majority of whom regard themselves as bastions and champions of democracy and equality, to muster political courage and reconsider South Africa's membership instead of underwriting apartheid by condoning the participation of a racist régime in the meetings and activities of the Consultative Parties.

Mr. ZAFAR-UL-HAQ (Pakistan): The continent of Antarctica has a total area of 14 million square kilometres, approximately one-tenth of the world's land surface. Ninety-nine per cent of it is covered by a thick ice sheet. It is unique in that it is the only continent without any indigenous inhabitants or permanent settlers. The waters of the Southern Ocean are among the most biologically productive in the world and support one of the earth's unique, highly adapted and specialized ecosystems.

(Mr. Zafar-Ul-Haq, Pakistan)

The General Assembly has, over a number of years, debated the question of Antarctica and has underscored the vital importance of the continent. These debates have also highlighted the concern of the vast majority of the Members of the United Nations at its exclusion from participation in the decisions concerning the fate of Antarctica, which undoubtedly has a direct bearing on the future of our planet.

The Antarctic Treaty, signed in 1959 by a small number of countries, brought the continent, in effect, under their supervision. It is unequal and discriminatory since accession to the Treaty does not entitle the acceding States to participate in decision making. That is the prerogative of the Consultative Parties, which exercise full control over the admission of new Consultative Parties.

The Antarctic Treaty purports to further the purposes and principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations. It is, therefore, difficult to understand the logic behind the refusal of the Consultative Parties to invite the Secretary-General of the United Nations to attend the meetings of the Treaty Parties despite repeated requests by the international community expressed through the resolutions adopted by the General Assembly year after year.

The exclusive nature of the Treaty is evident from the fact that the documents of its meetings are not made public; the precise nature of the decisions is not made known to outsiders, and information trickles out only to the extent that the Consultative Parties wish to make it public. It would, therefore, be reasonable to assume that the information leaked out or made available to the rest of the world community would be filtered in a manner suited to the requirements of the Treaty signatories.

The Parties to the Treaty have time and again argued that the Treaty has worked in an exemplary fashion. It is true that it has held in abeyance the territorial claims of certain States over Antarctica and the use of the continent

(Mr. Zafar-Ul-Haq, Pakistan)

for peaceful purposes only. All these are positive elements. However, this does not and cannot imply that a Treaty which is open, non-discriminatory, equitable and universal will not prove to be equally, if not more, effective.

It is indeed ironic that while the Antarctic Treaty recognizes the interest of all mankind in Antarctica, the Parties to the Treaty have reserved to themselves exclusively the right to decide what is in the common interest of mankind. The decisions taken in the common interest of mankind are kept as closely guarded secrets from the vast majority of the same mankind.

The international community has expressed deep concern at the continuing degradation of the environment. The United Nations Conference on Environment and Development is to be convened in 1992 to discuss this major problem. The interest and the increasing concern of the world community over the environmental degradation in Antarctica and its impact on global environment were manifested at the first substantive session of the Preparatory Committee for the Conference held in Nairobi from 6 to 13 August 1990. And yet, Parties to th. Antarctic Treaty which are so disturbed about global environment and about its protection - and this we appreciate - refuse to divulge information or even discuss environmental questions relating to Antarctica. This attitude would certainly work to the detriment of the preparation of a comprehensive treaty dealing with the problems of global environment.

The adoption of the Convention on the Regulation of Antarctic Mineral Resource Activities by the Parties to the Treaty in June 1988, despite the objections and protests of the overwhelming majority of the States of the world, is another example of the fact that the Treaty Parties do not hold themselves accountable to the international community and that the decision-making lies in the hands of a few. However, it is fortunate indeed that, following the adoption of the minerals

(Mr. Zafar-Ul-Haq, Pakistan)

Convention, some of the Antarctic Treaty Consultative Parties, namely, Australia, Belgium, France, Germany, India, Italy and New Zealand, have reportedly reconsidered the issue and decided not to sign or ratify the Convention.

It is our fervent hope that, in order to safeguard the Antarctic ecosystem, the minerals Convention will not be allowed to enter into force. We believe that, in the interest of our common future, the minerals Convention must be discarded and a permanent ban on prospecting, exploration and exploitation of minerals must be enforced.

Many environmentalists and scientists are of the view that Antarctica should be preserved as the last continent that has not been substantially altered by human activity. Some of the Treaty Parties have also lent support to the call of the international community for the establishment of Antarctica as a nature reserve or a world park. In our view, any move to draw up a comprehensive environmental convention on the conservation and protection of Antarctica and its dependent and associated ecosystems and to establish a nature reserve and world park, must be negotiated with the full participation of the international community and should be pursued within the context of the United Nations system, including the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development.

(Mr. Zafar-Ul-Haq, Pakistan)

Antarctica is the common heritage of mankind. Protection and conservation of the continent are the common responsibility of all. Any régime for the protection of Antarctica must have the support of the international community if it is to be successful. Only an open, equitable, accountable and universal treaty can achieve the effective protection of Antarctica and its environment.

The establishment, under United Nations sponsorship, of a station in Antarctica, with the aim of promoting co-ordinated international co-operation in scientific research, would benefit mankind. In particular, it would ensure that the importance of Antarctica to the global environment and ecosystems was kept in view. Such a station could also act as an early-warning system with regard to climatic change and accidents.

It is unfortunate that the racist minority régime of Pretoria not only is a consultative party to the Treaty but continues to participate in the meetings of the Consultative Parties despite the demand of the international community that it should be excluded from participation in any such meetings.

In its final declaration, the Ninth Conference of Heads of State or Government of the Non-Aligned Countries reaffirmed that Antarctica should for ever be used exclusively for peaceful purposes, in the interests of mankind, and should be accessible to all nations. It recognized the interest of mankind as a whole in Antarctica, in terms of international peace and security and of the environment and its impact on global climatic conditions. It affirmed the interest of mankind in ensuring that the environment and the dependent and associated ecosystem of Antarctica are conserved and are protected against all harmful human activities. It stated that the international community is entitled to information on all aspects of Antarctica and that the United Nations must be made a central repository of such information. My delegation supports the declaration in its totality and

(Mr. Zafar-Ul-Haq, Pakistan)

calls upon the parties to the Antarctic Treaty to co-operate with the rest of the international community to secure its implementation.

The Antarctic Treaty was concluded at a time when a large number of States that are now Members of the United Nations were still struggling to exercise their right to self-determination and independence. The world has changed since then. So should the régime in Antarctica. It must acquire legitimacy through openness, universality and equity, and through a renewed commitment to the philosophy that Antarctica is the common heritage of mankind, that it is not subject to appropriation by any State or person, and that it should be reserved exclusively for peaceful purposes. The delegation of Pakistan will continue to strive towards this objective, in co-operation with the other Members of the United Nations.

I conclude by expressing my delegation's full support for the draft resolution on the subject. It was introduced by the representative of Malaysia, and Pakistan is one of its sponsors.

Mr. ADEKANYE (Nigeria): The Nigerian delegation wishes to associate itself, once again, with the concern that other representatives and, indeed, a large section of the international community have expressed about the question of Antarctica, which is now before the Committee under agenda item 67. Since the 1983 session, when several States, including Nigeria, first brought this matter before the United Nations General Assembly, the world community's awareness of the ongoing activities in Antarctica has sharpened greatly, and its interest in those activities has increased dramatically. It is reassuring that the dogged efforts of all concerned have been paying off and that, as a result, Parties to the Antarctic Treaty, particularly the voting members, are beginning to respond to global public opinion as regards their activities in the southern virgin continent.

The significant changes in international relations that have been evident in the past year have resulted in renewed interest in questions related to the

(Mr. Adekanye, Nigeria)

interrelationship between enduring global peace, common security, economic development and a sustainable environment. In the world of the 1990s the question of Antarctica can only gain increasing prominence as the world reels under the full impact of the welcome wave of democratization, openness and public accountability. Antarctica may not have settled the human-population problem, but its marine and living resources, its delicate ecosystem and its strategic value all make it no less deserving of the attention of all mankind - the Parties to the Antarctic Treaty and everyone else.

Against this background we note with regret, from the Secretary-General's report on Antarctica - document A/45/459 - the persistence of old norms of exclusiveness, discrimination and secrecy in the administration of Antarctica, as well as in meetings on and activities in the continent. The 25 Antarctic Treaty Consultative Parties take all the major decisions, while the 14 non-consultative partners appear to be mere onlookers.

As Nigeria has stated on several occasions, we consider the 1959 Antarctic Treaty to be fundamentally flawed. It remains the least popular of all multilateral disarmament Treaties in force today. After 31 years of existence, the Treaty can boast of only 39 signatories, of which the only one from the African continent is apartheid South Africa. Secondly, its restriction of membership to those countries with the scientific and technological capability to undertake a research expedition in Antarctica is shortsighted and discriminatory and runs counter to the very principles and objectives of the United Nations that the Treaty claims to espouse. Thirdly, its lack of recognition of a role for the United Nations itself in the affairs of such an important uninhabited continent, which constitutes nearly 10 per cent of the globe, makes the intentions of the Treaty Parties rather suspect. Nigeria, therefore, has found it difficult to support the

(Mr. Adekanye, Nigeria)

Treaty, the very existence and practical manifestations of which foster inequality and reinforce injustice between nations.

We are concerned that a Treaty designed to promote pure scientific-research activities in Antarctica has gradually, over the years, served instead to promote the commercial interests of a few countries, on account of the continent's vast economic and other potential. We find it difficult to reconcile ourselves to the fact that, far from averting international conflict arising from competing and territorial claims, the Treaty has, in reality, legitimized such claims. It has promoted the ownership of scientific stations, bases and territories occupied by some of the consultative Powers, and has done so in a manner reminiscent of colonial conquests of the past. For us, the Treaty's claim of nuclear-weapon-free, demilitarized status for Antarctica appears hollow in view of the fact that the Treaty parties have turned a blind eye to apartheid South Africa's free access to a portion of Antarctica for the purpose of conducting missile tests, as was mentioned recently in the Secretary-General's report of 29 October 1990 - document A/45/571 - concerning investigations into South Africa's nuclear-tipped ballistic missile capability.

(Mr. Adekanye, Nigeria)

The net effect of all these and other related developments is that the Antarctic continent is far from what was envisaged in the 1959 Treaty. First, serious negative effects have been evident in the systematic depletion of the scarce and dwindling living and non-living resources of Antarctica as a result of increased human activities engineered by large-scale economic attractions and potentially huge mineral deposits like oil, gas and rare metals.

Secondly, construction of scientific stations, runways, tourist hotels and other supporting facilities are taking their toll on the 2-per-cent ice-free terrestrial part of Antarctica, which has become over-congested, with adverse consequences for the fragile ecology of the continent. Most important, the issue of frequent environmental pollution, suppressed over the years because of the physical location and remoteness of the virgin continent, has come to the forefront of international concern as the world grapples with the full consequences of environmental pollution and degradation. There have been reported cases of the dumping of toxic wastes by stations and vessels, the burning of fossil fuel and combustible wastes in open pits, with the consequent aerial spread of pollution, and large-scale oil spills from vessels and storage pumps. The case of the Argentine supply vessel Bahia Paraiso, which spilled nearly 250,000 gallons of oil near Palmer Station in February 1989 and polluted almost 15 kilometres of the Antarctic coast, is particularly relevant. That accident has not been fully investigated nor has its environmental effect on the surrounding waters, the penguin colonies and the krill stocks been accurately determined up to now.

As a coastal State and part of the African continent sharing the South Atlantic Ocean, which commands the approaches to a vital portion of Antarctica, Nigeria cannot but be concerned about these adverse developments in Antarctica. It is common knowledge that upsetting the delicate balance of the Antarctic ecosystem

(Mr. Adekanye, Nigeria)

through substantial human activities, such as mineral exploration, would cause a decrease in the Antarctic ice temperature with a corresponding rise in its sea level. For the virgin continent with over 90 per cent of the world's ice, a rise of even a few inches could result in a sharp increase in global sea levels that could submerge many coastal settlements, particularly those in close proximity. On the other hand, because Antarctica plays a vital role in deep ocean circulation, far away from the Antarctic beds, pollution of its ocean would have far-reaching effects several thousand kilometres away and into the northern oceans, including the South Atlantic. That is why my Government was compelled to highlight this serious concern in the opening speech by our Minister of External Affairs at the second meeting of the States of the Zone of Peace and Co-operation of the South Atlantic, hosted by Nigeria at Abuja, from 25 to 29 June 1990.

On that occasion, he drew attention to the need for the environmental protection of the South Atlantic region, and called for utmost vigilance in ensuring that the region's marine environment was safe from the illegal dumping of radioactive and other hazardous wastes on our sea-beds thus safeguarding the marine life and fauna on which our fishing resources depend. The statement went further:

> "In this connection, member States of the Zone need to take great interest in the disturbing developments currently taking place on the virgin continent of Antarctica whose reported mineral wealth has already attracted international attention. Antarctica must continue to serve purely as a global scientific laboratory and its exploration to be confined to peaceful non-commercial purposes. The increasing reports of massive oil spillage from ships and tankers plying Antarctica should spur us into action to alert the international community to the grave dangers of environmental pollution and spill-over effects into the South Atlantic Ocean, including our shores."

(Mr. Adekanye, Nigeria)

As a first step in addressing these concerns, my delegation welcomes the new momentum in favour of a legally binding moratorium on mineral exploration in Antarctica by some key members of the Antarctic Treaty Consultative Party States, including France, Australia and New Zealand. We also note the relevant, positive stand being taken by the public, parliamentary houses and non-governmental organizations in a number of countries, including Belgium and Italy and, most recently, the United States.

Even before the Convention on the Regulation of Antarctic Mineral Resource Activities (CRAMRA) was signed in Wellington, New Zealand, in 1988, Nigeria had spoken against attempts to lend legality to the degradation and despoliation of the Antarctic environment. It is thus a triumph, limited though this was, for those championing the cause of exclusively peaceful scientific research activities in Antarctica that CRAMRA now stands discredited. It is yet another discriminatory ploy meant to perpetuate the flaws in the Antarctic Treaty.

Nigeria thus calls for a universal régime that would protect the Antarctic environment, impose an effective control over minerals prospecting and extraction, and halt the present indiscriminate scramble for their commercial exploitation. The current Antarctic Treaty is, even though claims are made to the contrary, inherently incapable of performing these roles in the long run. Neither can it meet the legitimate aspirations of the international community in consonance with the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter. The perennially hostile disposition of the Antarctic Treaty Consultative Parties to the request by non-parties for open and frank discussions on the question, and the Antarctic Treaty Consultative Parties' preferences for utter secrecy in the conduct of the affairs of a continent affecting the peace, security and development of all nations, big or small, leave much to be desired.

(Mr. Adekanye, Nigeria)

In the same vein, the Antarctic Consultative Party States' refusal to invite the Secretary-General or his representative to their current meeting in Santiago, Chile, which started on 19 November, in complete disregard of previous, relevant General Assembly resolutions, does not contribute to confidence-building.

It is my delegation's considered view that the review of the Antarctic Treaty in 1991 should provide ample opportunity finally to rectify these serious shortcomings so that the Treaty will enjoy broad appeal in the years ahead. At the core of these reforms is the fact that Antarctica must serve as and be declared a nature reserve or world park, made equally accessible to all countries, and a laboratory for scientific knowledge and research. All territorial claims whatsoever must be permanently frozen. In place of the present Antarctic Treaty there should be a new legal régime, concluded under the aegis of the United Nations, to ensure universal membership and to safeguard the interests of all nations.

Pending that arrangement, however, the monitoring of the activities of Antarctica by the United Nations, through the Secretary-General, should be facilitated. It is my delegation's hope that these suggestions will be considered seriously and that the Antarctic Treaty Consultative Parties will be favourably disposed towards the two draft resolutions on the question before the Committee - A/C.1/45/L.63/Rev.1 and A/C.1/45/L.64 - which my delegation fully endorses.

The CHAIRMAN: I now call on the representative of Malaysia to introduce the revised text of the joint draft resolution on the question of Antarctica.

Mr. REDZUAN (Malaysia): I have the honour to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/45/L.63/Rev.1, entitled "Question of Antarctica", on behalf of my own country and Antigua and Barbuda, Bangladesh, Brunei Darussalam, Comoros, Ghana, Indonesia, Kenya, Lesotho, Mexico, Nepal, Nigeria, Oman, Pakistan, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Senegal, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Tunisia, Uganda, United Republic of Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

Developments since our delibrations on this item last year have more than ever underlined the need for international collective action for the protection of Antarctica. At the same time, there is a clear link with the increasing consciousness and concern of the international community for its global environmental protection. Since Antarctica covers 10 per cent of the Earth's surface and involves about 70 per cent of the world's available freshwater resources, we share a common responsibility to protect its environment. Because of its critical importance to the global environment and ecology, Antarctica must stand as a challenge to the international community to shoulder this shared responsibility, which is consistent with the current trends in international relations, when cold-war divisions are giving way to international democratization, consensus and co-operation. The thrust of the draft resolution is indeed towards achieving that aim.

I regret to inform the Committee that once again consensus has not been possible. Nevertheless, the sponsors have endeavoured to take into account to the greatest possible extent the views and concerns of the Antarctic Treaty Consultative Parties. It is clear that the tone of the draft resolution reflects this awareness of the need for balance and accommodation in the interests of all members.

(Mr. Redzuan, Malaysia)

However, as I pointed out earlier, the draft resolution's overriding objective is the protection of Antarctica. If sacrificing such an objective is the price for the achievement of consensus, there can be no doubt about the sponsors' clear preference.

The draft resolution emphasizes the importance of Antarctica to the global environment, and the need for its protection against all harmful human activities and for the democratization of the management of the continent for the benefit of mankind as a whole. The preambular paragraphs reaffirm the significance of Antarctica and its relationship to the global environment. The preambular part also reaffirms that Antarctica should continue for ever to be used exclusively for peaceful purposes and that it should not become the scene or object of international discord. It further reflects the consciousness of the environmental degradation that mining would cause to Antarctica, and welcomes the initiative taken by some Consultative Party countries in promoting Antarctica as a nature reserve or world park and the banning of prospecting and mining in and around Antarctica.

The preambular paragraphs also share the concern over the environmental degradation of Antarctica and its impact on global environment, as expressed at the first substantive session of the Preparatory Committee for the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, held in Nairobi last August. The preambular part further reaffirms the necessity for ensuring the comprehensive protection and conservation of Antarctica through a multilateral framework negotiated with the full participation of all members of the international community. It also addresses the need to prevent or minimize the impact of human activities resulting from the large number of scientific stations and expeditions in Antarctica. In this regard it welcomes the ongoing trend of acknowledging the

(Mr. Redzuan, Malaysia)

need for internationally co-ordinated scientific research stations in Antarctica in order to minimize unnecessary duplication in logistical support facilities.

In paragraph 1 the General Assembly would express its regret that despite numerous resolutions the Consultative Parties have not seen fit to invite the Secretary-General or his representative to the meetings of the Antarctic Treaty Consultative Parties, including the special session of the Antarctic Treaty Consultative Meeting in Santiago from 19 November to 7 December this year. It once again urges the Antarctic Treaty Consultative Parties to invite the Secretary-General or his representative to their future meetings.

In paragraph 2 the General Assembly would call upon the Treaty Parties to deposit information and documents covering all aspects of Antarctica with the Secretary-General of the United Nations and request the Secretary-General to submit a report on his evaluations to the General Assembly at its next session.

In paragraph 3 the General Assembly would express its conviction that any move to draw up a comprehensive environmental convention on the conservation and protection of Antarctica and its dependent and associated ecosystems, as well as establishing a nature reserve or world park, must be negotiated with the full participation of the international community. In this regard, we believe the matter should be pursued within the context of the United Nations system, including the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development.

After consultations with our co-sponsors, we have agreed to delete paragraph 4. However, it remains our firm conviction that the various aspects of concerns over Antarctica's environment should be appropriately addressed by the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development.

In paragraph 5 the General Assembly would urge all members of the international community to support all efforts to ban prospecting and mining in and around Antarctica and to ensure that all activities should be used exclusively for

(Mr. Redzuan, Malaysia)

the purpose of peaceful scientific investigation, and that all activities should ensure the maintenance of international peace and security in Antarctica and the protection of its environment, and should be for the benefit of all mankind.

In paragraph 6 the General Assembly would request the Secretary-General to undertake a comprehensive study, with the help of relevant United Nations programmes and specialized agencies, such as the World Meteorological Organization and the United Nations Environment Programme, on the establishment of a United Nations-sponsored station in Antarctica, with a view to promoting co-ordinated international co-operation in scientific research for the benefit of mankind, particularly the importance of Antarctica to the global environment and ecosystems, as well as to act as an early-warning system on climate change and accidents.

In paragraph 7 the General Assembly would urge all States to co-operate with the Secretary-General and to continue consultations on all aspects relating to Antarctica.

In paragraph 8 the General Assembly would further request the Secretary-General to submit, within its existing resources, a report on the state of the environment in Antarctica and its impact on the global system at its next session.

We are aware of the financial implications of our proposals in paragraphs 6 and 8. But the Secretariat could overcome the problem by preparing the reports using available data and resources. Data could also be obtained from international scientific studies by such bodies as Greenpeace. Data from the Treaty Party countries would also be welcomed to assist the Secretariat in preparing the reports.

Finally, in paragraph 9 the General Assembly would decide to include in the provisional agenda of its forty-sixth session the item entitled "Question of Antarctica".

(Mr. Redzuan, Malaysia)

The sponsors of the draft resolution have made every effort to avoid confrontation. The text has been carefully drafted in reasonable language, taking into account recent developments and reiterating fundamental concerns of the international community.

We are confident that the Committee will adopt the draft resolution, as it has similar draft resolutions in the past. We therefore present the draft resolution for action by the Committee.

The CHAIRMAN: We have heard the last speaker on the list of speakers for this morning's meeting and thus the Committee has concluded its general debate on agenda item 67.

PROGRAMME OF WORK

The CHAIRMAN: In accordance with the programme of work and timetable, on Friday, 23 November, the Committee is scheduled to embark on the next stage of its work, namely, the general debate, consideration of and action on draft resolutions under agenda items 68, 69 and 70, relating to international security. However, as there are no speakers inscribed in the list of speakers for that day, the Committee will begin its consideration of those agenda items on Monday, 26 November.

Also on Monday, as the Committee decided earlier, we will take action on the two draft resolutions under agenda item 67, "Question of Antarctica". I would encourage the delegations concerned to complete their consultations as soon as possible.

I would also propose that the deadline for the closure of the list of speakers for the general debate under international security agenda items be extended to Monday, 26 November, at 6 p.m. If I hear no objection, I shall take it that the proposal is acceptable to the Committee.

It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 11.55 a.m.

UNITED NATIONS

General Assembly

FORTY-FIFTH SESSION

Official Records

FIRST COMMITTEE
44th meeting
held on
Monday, 26 November 1990
at 10 a.m.
New York

VERBATIM RECORD OF THE 44th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. Rana (Nepal)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.50 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 67 (continued)

QUESTION OF ANTARCTICA: GENERAL DEBATE, CONSIDERATION OF AND ACTION ON DRAFT RESOLUTIONS

The CHAIRMAN: The sponsors of draft resolution A/C.1/45/L.64 have proposed some changes in the text, and the revised text will therefore not be available until this afternoon. Owing to that fact and to the fact that consultations on draft resolution A/C.1/45/L.63/Rev.1 are continuing, I propose that the Committee take action on draft resolutions A/C.1/45/L.63/Rev.1 and A/C.1/45/L.64 in the afternoon of Wednesday, 28 November.

AGENDA ITEMS 68, 69, 70 AND 12

GENERAL DEBATE, CONSIDERATION OF AND ACTION ON DRAFT RESOLUTIONS ON INTERNATIONAL SECURITY AGENDA ITEMS

REPORT OF THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL (chapter III, section D)

The CHAIRMAN: I should like to make a few comments on international peace and security, an area of grave concern and interest to all of us.

The improvement of the international political environment that began to be discerned at the previous two sessions of the General Assembly has continued to gain momentum leading to the historical juncture at which the world community now finds itself. We all have to admit that, particularly since last year, the global situation has undergone changes greater than anyone could have imagined a few years ago. As has rightly been said, both in the plenary meetings of the General Assembly and in this Committee, the current session will go down in the history of the United Nations as the first post-cold-war session.

All delegations have remarked that the cold war was over, thus heralding the emergence of a new political order. East-West confrontation was seen as giving way to dialogue and co-operation favouring progress in arms control and disarmament, in resolving certain regional conflicts, in enhancing the peace-keeping and peacemaking role of the United Nations. The dramatic changes in Central and Eastern Europe and the newly achieved stage of European integration were also underlined as remarkable achievements in the process of consolidating peace, freedom and democracy. These historic far-reaching accomplishments were credited, in part, to the new major-Power dialogue and partnership and to the role played by the President of the Soviet Union, Mr. Mikhail Gorbachev. Some delegations pointed to the struggle of all peoples for a better life and a more secure planet as an important factor in transformng the international climate.

While highlighting these encouraging trends, Member States also warned against

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any complacency and against overlooking the sources of international conflict. Indeed, other troubling developments existing in the world remind us that the road to global peace and security is not very smooth and that much more remains to be done. The recent events in the Gulf were considered to be a serious reminder to the world community that the end of East-West rivalry does not automatically lead to the elimination of threats to peace and security and its future is not without uncertainties. Similarly, many countries underlined the fact that existing economic disparities, the flaring up of ethnic conflicts and excessive spells of nationalism, violation of human rights, degradation of the environment, the use of drugs and other negative phenomena, all point to the urgent need for global action to remove such threats to peace and security. It was the common view that the United Nations should be further strengthened as the central mechanism of the international community for meeting the new challenges and seizing the opportunities of this post-bipolar world.

It is against such a new backdrop that the Committee's deliberations will unfold on items relating to international security. As members are aware, this year there are three items on the agenda. The first one is entitled "Strengthening of security and co-operation in the Mediterranean region", which has been considered since 1981. Another item is "Review of the implementation of the Declaration on the Strengthening of International Security", which this body has been considering since 1969. The Declaration itself was adopted at the twenty-fifth session of the Assembly, which means that at this session we are commemorating the twentieth anniversary of this important document. Finally, the Committee will consider the item entitled "Implementation of the Declaration on the Preparation of Societies for Life in Peace", an important issue that has been on the Committee's agenda for a decade. Our debate on all these items will take place

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on the basis of the reports of the Secretary-General contained in documents A/45/713, A/45/516 and Add.1, and A/45/575.

As representatives will note from the comments made in their replies, member States underlined the fact that in spite of the recent changes in the world the issues on our agenda have still retained their topicality. They expressed the view that given the present reality of the termination of the cold war with all its negative consequences, the newly emerged international circumstances would favour, more than in the past, the implementation of the principles and objectives of the documents relating to international security.

In this regard I should like to point out that at this session many delegations have expressed, forcefully, the opinion that the end of the cold-war period and the improved East-West relations have revealed the fragility of the security system based on the military factor alone. They presented, in this regard, a wealth of ideas and suggestions aimed at putting into effect a new global security system as envisaged in the United Nations Charter. Delegations have frequently referred to the report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization, which noted that a comprehensive approach to security was axiomatic if the unfolding opportunities emerging as a result of the deep changes in the world were now to be realized.

It is worth mentioning that the delegation of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics submitted at this session a memorandum (A/45/626) entitled "The United Nations in the post-confrontation world" containing a wide spectrum of proposals reflecting its conceptual approach to the strategic role of the world Organization in the new structure of international relations. Likewise, in a joint statement entitled "Responsibility for Peace and Security in the Changing World" (A/45/598),

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also submitted at this session, the United States and the Soviet Union pointed to the special attention they attach in the United Nations to promoting practical, multifaceted solutions to the issues of international peace and security, political, economic, social, cultural and humanitarian problems. In this context, the two major Powers stated that they would pursue co-operation with all Member States in the attainment of a number of proposals which, in their view, could strengthen United Nations efforts in promoting international peace and security in all its aspects.

(The Chairman)

I should like to point out that, besides these two proposals, a good number of suggestions have been put forward, explicitly or obliquely, by other delegations, reflecting their positions on the need to shape a new concept of international security. Many delegations hold that all countries must participate in the process of defining the elements of a new concept of global security, which in their opinion should be based on the United Nations Charter and take into account the characteristics and specific security needs of the States of each region and the cultural identities of their peoples.

I conclude by pointing out, at the risk of repeating myself, that the new situation existing today and the new spirit of co-operation at the United Nations and elsewhere provide a unique, unprecedented opportunity to look anew and seriously at the question of international security in all its aspects. It is my belief that new times demand new approaches and perceptions. This session is one of those rare historic times for Member States when they can engage in dialogue, putting forth fresh ideas and imaginative suggestions aimed at strengthening the role of the United Nations in fulfilling its main responsibility of maintaining peace and security in the world. To the extent that global peace and security is the concern of all nations, the formulation and fashioning of a new response to the world situation that has emerged should also be the preoccupation of us all.

Mr. MLLOJA (Albania): The Albanian delegation is participating in the debate on agenda item 68, "Strengthening of security and co-operation in the Mediterranean region", with the responsibility of a country belonging to the region, in order to make its contribution to furthering the establishment of peace and security there and to strengthening the spirit of co-operation between its peoples.

The Albanian delegation notes that our Committee and the General Assembly have

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for long been seized of, and have seriously considered, the situation in the Mediterranean region. We cannot fail to welcome the good offices of our Organization, and especially of the Secretary-General, in promoting the positive trends in the region.

The positive changes currently taking place in international relations have led naturally to a more favourable atmosphere for the advance of the process of strengthening security and co-operation in our region.

The security of the Mediterranean is closely linked with the security of the European continent and the Balkans and in general with international peace and security throughout the world. The developments taking place in Europe aimed at freeing it from the spirit of blocs and confrontation and building a new European structure, as endorsed at the Paris summit, should therefore contribute to a relaxation of the climate in this region, especially in the direction of disarmament.

It is an old aspiration of the Mediterranean peoples to turn their region into a zone of peace, security and fruitful co-operation, free from conflicts and confrontation. But, regrettably, contrary to this aspiration, we note that this basin continues to have a huge military presence. The military presence of foreign fleets is undoubtedly a permanent cause of concern for the Mediterranean peoples, especially in the light of increasing military activities and the recent deployment to the region of more naval units. They create new dangers to peace and security and the general equilibrium in the region.

There is therefore strong logic in the persistent demand for the withdrawal from the Mediterranean of foreign fleets and any foreign military presence whatsoever and for the cessation of all their military exercises. It is the duty of all the countries of the region not to allow any foreign forces to use their

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lands, territorial waters and air space for military activities against countries of the region or beyond. Albania, as in the past, will in the future, too, continue to do its share in this direction.

Aware of the existence of some hotbeds of tension in the region, the Albanian delegation holds that their exacerbation seriously threatens regional peace and security. Experience testifies to the well-known fact that such conflicts have brought nothing good to the peoples of this region or of others; on the contrary, we have been witness to the tragedy, numerous victims and huge material damage that have plagued many countries. In this context, the plight of the Palestinian people and the people of Lebanon, the Gulf crisis and so on bring to light the dangerous consequences of the use of force against peace-loving peoples and countries for the purpose of occupation.

Our view is that concrete steps should be taken by the respective Mediterranean peoples and States themselves, without foreign interference, to remove sources of tension on the basis of the principles of sovereignty, independence, territorial integrity and non-interference in the internal affairs of others. It would be commendable if the logic of confrontation and the use of force gave way to a spirit of dialogue, good understanding and co-operation.

The People's Socialist Republic of Albania has always welcomed with great pleasure all the efforts made on the Mediterranean plane to create a peaceful climate in this region. As a Balkan country, we similarly hold that a peaceful and stable Balkans directly benefits Europe as a whole and the Mediterranean. In this connection, I should like to bring to the Committee's attention the Joint Communiqué of the Foreign Ministers of the Balkan States, who met in Tirana on 24 October 1990. It says, among other things:

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"A stable Balkans, which is advancing on the course of current developments, is a factor of peace and security for the entire Mediterranean region and Europe." (A/45/701, appendix I, p. 4)

We recognize that only co-operation in a peaceful and constructive climate can lead to the strengthening of economic, commercial and cultural links between peoples. The Mediterranean peoples have many things in common and to share for the mutual benefit of each other and other peoples of the world.

With these aims, motivated by good will, my country has participated in numerous Mediterranean activities of different kinds during this year, some of which I shall mention. Albania was represented by a delegation at the Nicosia Ministerial Conference on the environment in the Mediterranean last April and at the meeting of the United Nations Environment Programme in Athens, which discussed the plan of action on the Mediterranean. Likewise, we sent a delegation with observer status to the meeting in Palma de Majorca on the Mediterranean in the framework of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe process.

In conclusion, I should like to reiterate the wish and the readiness of my Government to do its best to contribute to the advantages that our regional co-operation offers for peace, stability, progress and the well-being of our peoples.

Mr. BORG OLIVIER (Malta): Since this is the first time that my delegation has addressed the Committee, Sir, I take this opportunity of congratulating you on your well-merited election to the chairmanship of this very important Committee. I also extend my congratulations to the other members of the Bureau.

At the outset of my statement, I wish to thank the Secretary-General for the excellent studies that have been made available to us on so many critical issues of disarmament and international security, including those on nuclear weapons, on the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East and on verification.

Many speakers have already referred to the profound political and democratic changes that are taking place in many parts of the world, particularly Central and Eastern Europe. Malta, as a European country, welcomes these changes and supports further measures to promote the process of entente and political unity in Europe. We strongly believe that, while the new democratic forces in Europe have unleashed new challenges, it is more possible now than in the past to anticipate and predict developments and therefore plan for peace in the future.

The evolutionary change that has been unravelling in Europe is also moulding a new East-West relationship, strengthening co-operation, causing the abandonment of Power-bloc confrontation, ushering in new forms of confidence- and security-building measures and leading to openness and transparency in negotiations, particularly on arms limitations and disarmament issues, which are all leading to a unified security framework in Europe.

International security, which for a time was under the strong influence of the bipolar dimension, is once again being perceived from its original political perspective as defined by the founding fathers of this Organization and as embodied in the purposes and principles of the Charter.

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The settlement of conflicts by peaceful means rather than by the threat or use of force has gathered momentum. Peace initiatives in Central America, Asia and Africa are a significant indication of the potential that exists for finding solutions by peaceful means to regional problems that are still threatening international peace and security.

Approximately 12 months ago President Bush and President Gorbachev met on a stormy day in the sheltered harbour of Malta. While outside the harbour the waves were lashing furiously against the breakwater and the bastions that had sheltered so many generations of Maltese and their friends, the Presidents of the United States and the Soviet Union, on board the liner Maxim Gorky, in a calm and friendly atmosphere, provided the world with a historic turning point, ending the cold war and opening avenues to disarmament negotiations.

Since then there have been a number of bilateral and multilateral efforts that have enhanced the prospects of building a common security system, reversing the armaments race and reducing the military arsenals in many parts of the world. My delegation sincerely hopes that this trend will help us to establish new concepts of security requirements that will permit all individuals to live their life in dignity, peace and freedom.

Positive developments have undoubtedly been evident in the negotiations that have taken place in Vienna during the last 20 months on conventional forces in Europe and that were successfully concluded a few days ago. The agreements reached in this area have strengthened not only the position of groups of countries but also that of individual States, laying the foundation of greater security and stability in Europe. The signing in Paris last week of the first treaty on the reduction of conventional armed forces in Europe is a unique event in the annals of disarmament negotiations. Malta welcomes this historic agreement.

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Simultaneously, the Vienna Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE) process has been building on the 1986 Stockholm document for the purpose of developing additional measures of a confidence-building nature with a view to enhancing security and reducing the dangers of military confrontation in Europe.

The institutionalization of security arrangements in Europe established by the Paris Conference of States participating in the CSCE has cemented the efforts of all European countries to establish a new security order in Europe. This major achievement has created a mechanism for conflict resolution and the settlement of disputes. In this respect, Malta feels honoured, at this particular period in history, to be acting as host next January to the CSCE meeting of experts on the Peaceful Settlement of Disputes.

In another area, we note with satisfaction the commitment made by the United States and the Soviet Union to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons, chemical weapons, and missiles capable of carrying such weapons, as well as their agreement to destroy a major part of their stockpiles and not to produce chemical weapons. At the same time, we are all aware that the threat of use of chemical weapons is still a source of concern to all peace-loving countries. Malta therefore joins other delegations that have stressed the need to resolve the outstanding problems without further delay in order to conclude negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament on a universal convention banning the development, production, stockpiling and use of chemical weapons.

The specific draft resolutions on confidence-building measures and regional disarmament submitted this year for consideration by the Committee are a welcome source of encouragement to those countries that have consistently urged the need for dialogue on and co-operation in adopting practical measures to establish and strengthen confidence- and security-building measures in their region. It is our

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firm belief that progress achieved in reducing armaments in Europe could be applied to building confidence in other regions of the world, thus enhancing their stability and security.

Many delegations have appropriately highlighted these aspects in their interventions in the Committee. Indeed, Italy, speaking on behalf of the European Community and its member States, has pointed out that

> "new concepts of security at a regional level can be developed, notably through the establishment of conciliation mechanisms as well as of innovative forms of multilateral co-operation in the field of security." (A/C.1/45/PV.3, p. 17)

Malta welcomes this statement, knowing quite well that the European Community has been in the forefront in promoting regional co-operation. In this context, Malta, too, along with other countries, has for the past nine years been a principal sponsor in this Committee and in other international forums of the importance of intensifying efforts in promoting peace, security and co-operation in the Mediterranean region.

In the face of the favourable political environment, Mediterranean countries expect that the positive developments in Europe will have a longed-for positive impact on the region, which remains encumbered by some of the most intractable problems. We feel that the pressure released in the political and military policies in Europe will make it possible to direct more attention to the Mediterranean region neighbouring the southern flanks of Europe.

As already stated, Malta, together with other Mediterranean countries, has spared no effort in the search for security and co-operation in the region. Malta, which forms an integral part of the Mediterranean region, has participated actively during past years in important meetings intended to contribute to the enhancement of peace, security and development in the Mediterranean.

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The Declaration on the Prospects of Global Dialogue on Security and Co-operation in the Mediterranean, adopted at the Third Ministerial Conference of the Mediterranean Non-Aligned Countries, held in Algiers in June 1990, confirms the sincere desire of these countries to work closely with their partners in the search for peace and stability in the region. In their final communiqué the Foreign Ministers also expressed the will of the Mediterranean non-aligned countries to enhance their efforts in order to contribute actively to the elimination of all hotbeds of tension in the region, to the promotion of just and lasting solutions, in accordance with the Charter and resolutions of the United Nations, and to the elimination of the conflicts and crises that are still threatening regional peace and stability.

The first meeting of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the 10 countries of the western Mediterranean, held in Rome in October 1990, also declared and manifested the desire to foster a new model of relations in the Mediterranean region as a whole, aimed at achieving stability and prosperity and providing support for democratic processes, economic reforms and development in the countries of the region.

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In many ways this co-operation was reiterated at the meeting on the Mediterranean region of the CSCE participating States, held in Palma de Mallorca in September-October 1990. The meeting broke new ground in that it was the first CSCE meeting on the Mediterranean that all the other Mediterranean countries not participants in CSCE agreed to attend. Many of these countries contributed actively to the meeting throughout all the sessions and on a variety of subjects. A record number of international bodies, all of them members of the United Nations family, attended and also contributed actively.

Security in the Mediterranean was also discussed and an overwhelming majority of States felt the need to express the importance they attach to this question. While the report of the meeting does not reflect fully the interest shown in the security question, the conclusions are a definite step forward on the two previous CSCE meetings on the Mediterranean in this respect.

It is significant that, in reaffirming the commitment of the CSCE participating States to, and in stressing the continuing relevance of, the provisions of the CSCE concerning security and co-operation in the Mediterranean, the meeting took note of the suggestion made that, when circumstances allowed, a meeting outside the CSCE could take place that, inspired by experiences of the CSCE process, could discuss a set of generally accepted rules and principles in the field of stability, co-operation and the human dimension in the Mediterranean.

A common theme that has emerged from the meetings I have just mentioned has been the widespread agreement on the proposal for convening, once the conditions are met in the region, a conference on security and co-operation in the Mediterranean (CSCM) and the readiness of the Mediterranean countries to enter into discussions on that proposal, and in particular on the procedures to follow it up.

The Government of Malta looks very positively on and supports the proposal for

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convening a CSCM. Without any doubt, the meetings held in Algiers, Rome and Palma de Mallorca have registered the wish of the littoral States of the Mediterranean to hold such a conference.

We must underline the political necessity of embarking as early as possible on a CSCM process, particularly in view of the still existing factors of instability, as well as the problems facing the Mediterranean and the continuing tensions in the region. The unresolved questions of Cyprus and Palestine have a direct bearing on the Mediterranean and the surrounding countries and regions.

The General Assembly has repeatedly recognized that security in the Mediterranean is closely linked to security in the rest of Europe and to international peace and security. Time and events have again and again shown that turmoil and tension in the Mediterranean continue to jeopardize efforts to bring closer together the Euro-Mediterranean countries.

The seriousness of events in the Gulf region and the reverberations they are having in the Mediterranean have further underlined and perhaps rendered imperative the initiation of a fruitful dialogue between countries in the north and those in the south of the Mediterranean, as well as with those that are involved in this very important sea and crossroad of civilizations.

While we acknowledge the geopolitical and cultural differences existing in the Mediterranean, the dimension of security and co-operation should be allowed to be fully explored by the countries bordering the Mediterranean Sea. These countries hold great potential for strengthening the links for co-operation not only among themselves but also with other European States.

This can be achieved by cohesive and well-co-ordinated measures in the region, perhaps through a Council of the Mediterranean, a proposal Malta has put forward at the Algiers Non-Aligned Ministerial Meeting. This proposed mechanism would bring

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together the parliamentarians of the political entities in the region by their attending regular sessions and also having a committee of ministers to monitor and direct developments in the Mediterranean.

It is precisely "developments" that has become the magic word for security in the Mediterranean. Indeed, besides enhancing security through arms limitation and disarmament measures, what will have an important bearing on security in the Mediterranean in the future is the elimination of disparities in the levels of social and economic development between the northern and southern countries of the Mediterranean region. It must be recognized that economic and social security have to move with the same pace and vigour as other areas of military security. Regional military security must complement and not replace economic, humanitarian and environmental security.

In this respect, the question of co-operation is comprehensively and positively covered in the CSCE Palma de Mallorca report. Early implementation of the agreements reached at the meeting relating to social and economic development, the protection of the ecosystems and the environment, as well as other areas, would enable the Mediterranean countries of the south to catch up with the advanced economic and social structures of those of the north.

My delegation believes that the United Nations can significantly contribute to matters relating to the Mediterranean, in particular through the monitoring of events in the Mediterranean, by engaging in liaison with the specialized agencies of the United Nations system, regional and subregional commissions, organizations and institutions, and by analysing how agreements and measures being undertaken in Europe and surrounding regions could influence regional security in the Mediterranean also.

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The improved relations in international affairs and the end of the cold war have opened up new avenues for establishing, within the framework of the United Nations, new opportunities for advancing negotiations on nuclear, conventional and chemical weapons that would enhance international security.

Yet it is recognized that the world is far from being a safe place in which to live. The Comprehensive Study on Nuclear Weapons reminds us in its conclusions that, while the quantitative growth of nuclear-weapon arsenals has been stopped, qualitative improvements of nuclear-weapon systems continue without significant restrictions in a few areas. We will therefore need to work, with confidence and trust, in our search for durable solutions to those problems and issues that still confront humanity.

In Europe much has been achieved. Contributions to the ever-increasing transparency in negotiations and understanding have given a new political objective to the action and behaviour of States in international affairs. The seminar on security concepts and military doctrines, held earlier this year in Vienna, and the "open skies" negotiations held in Canada and Hungary have introduced new dimensions in disarmament discussions which should enhance prospects for future negotiations on verification.

Perhaps the now acceptable concept of "open skies" can lead to the other concept of "open seas" and help to dispel the distrust that still prevails in the sphere of naval armaments. In this regard we note with interest the memorandum circulated by Sweden on naval armaments and disarmament. Malta has always given careful attention to maritime questions, and the issue of naval armaments is certainly a concern that merits the full attention of the international community.

Much has been written and much has been said; yet much still has to be achieved. In an interdependent world where disarmament and development are

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intertwined, actions to reduce military expenditures and to allocate resources thus gained to economic and social development must become a priority resolve for this decade. As I have already stated, security in military matters must be complemented by security in economic and social development.

International security is not the domain of any single State, but must result from the collective efforts of all countries in the consoldiation of peace, security and co-operation for all States.

Mr. SMIRNOV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (interpretation from Russian): Mr. Chairman, allow me first of all to express my gratitude for your introductory statement, in which you presented an extended picture of recent developments in the world's political situation, a time during which many extremely important historical events took place, requiring fundamentally new approaches to problems of ensuring international peace and security and the role played by the United Nations in the development of peaceful co-operation among States in a new era.

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The regular consideration by the General Assembly of issues of strengthening international security reflects the fundamental vocation of the United Nations, namely, to serve as a stabilizer for world policy, a collective co-ordinating centre for the administration of an interdependent and integrated world in the universal interests of mankind. Many statements made at plenary meetings and in Committees of the General Assembly have emphasized the critical and unique nature of the current times in the development of international relations. The ice age of the cold war, which only briefly was broken through by political thaws, is being replaced by a post-confrontation era, characterized by the discarding of ideological blinkers and double standards, the establishment of mutual understanding and partnership in the interest of strengthening international peace and security. As was noted in the statement made by Mikhail Sergeyevich Gorbachev, the President of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, at the Paris meeting of Heads of State and Government of parties to the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe:

> "We are entering into a world of different dimensions, in which universal human values are acquiring the same significance for all, where the freedom and welfare of man, the intrinsic value of human life, must become both the basis for universal security and the highest criterion of progress."

The positive trends in international relations compellingly demonstrate that new political thinking - the philosophical foundation of foreign policy of the Soviet Union during the period of perestroika - has firmly permeated the entire fabric of today's world policy. The genuinely revolutionary changes now taking place in Europe and in the entire system of international relations, as distinguished from the past, are not accompanied by global upsets and, despite their highly dramatic nature, are taking place in a framework of stability. We are

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thus seeing the formation of a new world order based on the primacy of law, the philosophy of non-violence and justice.

At the same time, the events of recent months, resulting from the gross violation by Iraq of the principles of international law and universally accepted norms of morality, are demonstrating that the positive processes which are gaining force have not acquired sufficient reserves of stability for a guaranteed prevention of the recurrence of the use of force and aggression. But we cannot fail to see something else as well. In these alarming days, the international community is demonstrating unprecedented solidarity in response to this challenge laid down by the aggressor. As was noted in the statement delivered by Mr. Shevardnadze, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, at the present session of the General Assembly:

> "We are again becoming united nations and are returning to our own global constitution - the Charter of the United Nations - to those of its provisions which were forgotten for a while but which experience has proved to be indispensable for the most important and most necessary of our tasks, the maintenance of international peace and security." (A/45/PV.6, p. 47)

We fully share the conclusion in the report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization:

> "To build peace and create conditions of stability in the world of the 1990s will require innovative responses to security challenges of a type radically different from those encountered in the past." (A/45/1, p. 15)

The objective of establishing an integral strategy of global partnership for the 1990s and the beginning of the next century is the subject of the memorandum submitted by the delegation of the Soviet Union at the forty-fifth session of the General Assembly, entitled "The United Nations in the post-confrontation world"

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(A/45/626). Such a strategy, we are convinced, must be based solely on the criteria for planet-wide coexistence - balance of interests and freedom of choice, political realism and responsible behaviour on the part of States, safeguarding democracy and human rights, adherence to openness and the rule of law. A strengthening of the central role of the United Nations in world affairs, unswerving compliance with its Charter, the need actively to support efforts within the context of the entire United Nations system aimed at implementing and strengthening the principles and the system of international peace, security and co-operation enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations: these are emphasized in the joint Soviet-United States statement "Responsibility for Peace and Security in the Changing World" (A/45/598).

The goal of strengthening international stability and the legal order requires a pooling of the efforts of all States, maximum and full utilization of all the means and opportunities in the arsenal of the United Nations. As we see it, a substantive contribution to the achievement of this objective must be made through discussion in the General Assembly of the question of the implementation of the Declaration on the Strengthening of International Security. The Soviet Union considers the Declaration, adopted 20 years ago, as an important document, one which is acquiring particular relevance today, at the present stage of world development. The anniversary of our Organization does not provide grounds for solemn speeches of praise. Rather, it marks a watershed for taking stock and for thinking seriously about our objectives for the foreseeable future.

The Declaration on the Strengthening of International Security was adopted during a period when a definite warming in the political atmosphere seemed insufficient to melt the thick layers of ice of mutual mistrust and suspicion. Dangerous competition was taking place in the world in the arms race, in a building

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up of lethal arsenals of weapons of mass destruction. Unfortunately, we too were unable to avoid being dragged into a historically futile process of flexing military muscles. Considerable political courage was required to embark firmly on a course of re-evaluating the concept of military parity, based on fear of mutual destruction, the doctrines of nuclear deterrence and restraint, so as to become aware that confrontational approaches cannot ensure security and peace.

Of decided significance for strengthening military-political stability is the process of disarmament, first and foremost nuclear disarmament. Today, no one would dispute that the world has become safer as a result of the elimination of Soviet and United States medium-range missiles. And we find the system of international security on a qualitatively new level of reliability today, in view of the conclusion between the Soviet Union and the United States of fundamental agreements concerning major reductions in strategic offensive weapons, other types of weapons of mass destruction and conventional weapons.

It is important that the entire international community is becoming increasingly aware that progress towards a non-violent world is impossible without a solution to questions of reducing the level of military confrontation, non-proliferation of nuclear, chemical and bacteriological weapons and missile technology and overcoming the ossified militarization of the economy.

The provision of the Declaration concerning the establishment of an effective system of collective security without military alliances continues to be relevant in the new conditions prevailing in today's world. The democratic changes in Europe, where the symbol of its split, the Berlin Wall, has crumbled, are creating a real basis for the establishment of qualitatively new co-operative security structures.

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Here we should like to emphasize the historic nature of the outcome of the meeting of Heads of State and Government of States, parties to the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE), held in Paris from 19 to 21 November, which, as President François Mitterrand stated, was marked by a particularly high quality of relations based on equality of rights, security and solidarity. The Treaty signed in Paris on conventional weapons is an extremely important component of the new security structure created in Europe. Worthy of special note is the agreement on the establishment of a conflict prevention centre, a kind of regulator of the military and political situation on the continent. The main thing, in our opinion, is that the Paris meeting laid the foundation for internationalization of the European process and the legal forms for the new European structures in the interests of the peoples who inhabit the continent.

The States parties to the CSCE - as is emphasized in the Charter of Paris for a New Europe - are aware that their fate is linked to the fates of all other countries and they stand ready to

"join forces with any and all States in common efforts to protect and advance the commonality of human values."

Of great significance in this context is the reaffirmation of full support for the United Nations in the enhancement of its role, as set forth in the Charter, in the promotion of international peace, security and justice.

We are convinced that the processes developing in Europe will also have an impact on the rest of the world, in particular on the situation in the Asia and Pacific Ocean region. Speaking recently in Vladivostok, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the USSR Mr. Shevardnadze put forward the idea of forming a single united European-Asian area of security and co-operation.

(Mr. Smirnov, USSR)

The universal principle of thinking globally and acting locally is in keeping with the spirit of the provisions of the Declaration in support of regional, subregional and bilateral co-operation as an important instrument for strengthening international security. In the coupling of the co-operative efforts of the United Nations with those of regional organizations lies a powerful means of strengthening stability of a new, higher quality, on a genuinely multidimensional basis.

The course of events confirms the significance of those provisions of the Declaration that deal with the unconditional validity of the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations.

Fully in keeping with the Declaration also is the present trend towards enhancement of the effectiveness of the Security Council, which is now fulfilling its original mission of serving as an effective instrument for responding to threats to international peace and security. A truly symbolic and extraordinary event was the September meeting of the Security Council at the Foreign Minister level to consider the situation resulting from the aggression committed by Iraq against Kuwait. The valuable experience of interaction among the members of the Security Council has been significantly enriched and can in future be applied to other international crises.

The Soviet Union believes that the course of events in the Persian Gulf dictates the need for speedy implementation of the recommendation contained in the Declaration that the Security Council take steps to facilitate the conclusion of agreements to make available to it national contingents of armed forces.

As we have already stated here, the Soviet Union is ready to conclude such an agreement and we believe that the very possibility of establishing a multinational United Nations force would have a strong, deterrent and sobering effect on any aggressor.

(Mr. Smirnov, USSR)

The Soviet Union is in favour of increasing the contribution of the United Nations to the establishment of a general structure for peace and security in support of the efforts of the Security Council and of the Secretary-General to prevent and to settle conflicts and to improve United Nations peace-keeping operations and enhance their effectiveness.

The Soviet Union is taking definite steps to bring about a speedy cessation of bloodshed in Afghanistan and to settle the conflict by involving all groups of the Afghan population in constructive dialogue and by holding general elections under United Nations supervision. We note with satisfaction that, thanks to the efforts of the five permament members of the Security Council, Indochinese, the States members of the Association of South-East Asian Nations, and other countries, it has been possible to initiate a process leading to a political solution of the Cambodian problem.

The successful untangling of the Nicaraguan knot should be supported by resolution of the situation in El Salvador and by measures to strengthen confidence and to reduce the level of armaments in Central America. The continuing tensions in the Middle East call for the immediate initiation of a turn-around towards peace and stability and the normalization of relations among the peoples of the region.

Over the two decades since the adoption of the Declaration on the Strengthening of International Security, the world has witnessed changes of historic importance. These include the achievement of independence by the majority of the peoples that had been under colonial domination. The United Nations has been able to demonstrate that the purposes and principles it proclaims are the postulates for an effective international law and, at the same time, an instrument for a practical policy for transforming the world.

(Mr. Smirnov, USSR)

The settlement of the question of Namibia, which marked a major breakthrough in the post-colonial epoch, opens up good prospects for a solution to other problems of southern Africa; first and foremost for the dismantling of apartheid in South Africa through political means. The Soviet Union hopes that the process of change which has now come to include South Africa will be irreversible, and will promote the strengthening of stability and good-neighbourliness in this region of the world. At the same time, there is a need for the combined efforts of all States and for the active involvement of the United Nations to find solutions to the problems of the remaining colonial territories on the basis of the free choice of their peoples.

The future of a safe world is closely linked to the shift to a new structure of international economic relations based on the principles of justice and equality - a shifting of resources from the military sphere to development needs, an expansion of multilateral co-operation in the regulation of foreign debt and the fight against hunger, poverty, disease and natural disasters. The global nature of the task of protecting the environment also requires a co-ordinated international approach, the joint implementation of effective technological decisions - solutions to save the planet from an ecological catastrophe.

The Soviet Union is in favour of consistent implementation of the provisions of the Declaration on universal respect and full guarantees for human rights, and is in favour of further expanding the business-like, objective dialogue on social and humanitarian problems and on issues relating to the free development of the individual. We are therefore in favour of a reaffirmation of universal concepts of human rights and the implementation of the entire range of universally recognized standards in this area.

(Mr. Smirnov, USSR)

Noting with satisfaction the progress that has been achieved in implementing the provisions of the Declaration on the Strengthening of International Security, the Soviet Union, guided by decisions of the Congress of People's Deputies and the Supreme Soviet of the USSR, intends to continue the search for multifaceted approaches to the question of securing international peace and security in a post-confrontation era and of ensuring that the United Nations has a central regulating role. In our view, the General Assembly would make a constructive contribution to the adoption of new approaches to the activity of the Organization if it were to mark the twentieth anniversary of the Declaration on the Strengthening of International Security by adopting a resolution reflecting the universal need for peace and stability, supported by the force of reason and of law.

There is another important question on the agenda of the United Nations. I refer to the strengthening of security and co-operation in the Mediterranean region. Naturally the Soviet Union is interested in ensuring peace, security and co-operation in that region. We are guided by that fact as the situation in the Mediterranean region is considered at the United Nations within the context of the general European process, and we are guided by it in our relations with the Mediterranean States. The joint Soviet-Spanish political declaration that was adopted during the visit of President Gorbachev of the USSR to Spain last October emphasizes specifically the need

> "to promote the process of dialogue between the Mediterranean countries and other interested States, to promote an improvement of the political climate, and to develop co-operation in this region".

We consider the strengthening of security in the Mediterranean region to be a wide-ranging process that involves parallel steps to settle conflict situations, reduce the level of military and naval confrontation, increase trust, and develop

(Mr. Smirnov, USSR)

fruitful regional co-operation in the political, economic, ecological, scientific and humanitarian spheres and in respect of other matters. In this regard, the Soviet Union has put forward a series of specific proposals aimed at reducing military confrontation in the Mediterranean. As those proposals are well known, there is no need for me to repeat them today.

With regard to the practical aspects of current conditions, the provisions of the Charter of Paris concerning the radical political changes that are taking place in Europe have assumed particular and positive significance for the Mediterranean region, as has the reaffirmation by the States parties to the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE) of their readiness to continue their efforts to strengthen security and co-operation in the Mediterranean, since that is an important factor in the creation of stability in Europe as a whole.

The USSR remains ready to discuss initiatives taken by every Mediterranean country. We support the proposal of Spain and Italy that the CSCE begin a process in respect of the Mediterranean region. In this regard, we view very positively the recent meeting in Palma de Majorca, to which the representative of Malta referred today. We hope that this will result in the successful establishment of a new system of relations in that region. There is no doubt that the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and all other regional organizations have contributed to the strengthening of security and to the development of co-operation in the Mediterranean region.

Of course, the United Nations has an important role to play in the resolution of long-standing problems in that region. We hope that the draft resolution on this agenda item will provide a positive basis for progress towards improvement of the situation there.

Mr. YU Mengjia (China) (interpretation from Chinese): As we meet to consider once again the question of international security, the world has reached an important turning-point. The old world pattern is being replaced by a new one. The old pattern has been broken, but the new one has yet to take shape. The international community is confronted with challenges and risks, but opportunities and hopes abound.

Over the past year, thanks to the concerted efforts of the peoples of all countries, there has been a further reduction in military confrontation at a global level, and the drive to maintain peace has been strengthened. Namibia has won its independence, and the unification of Germany has been realized. Co-operation in various regions is increasing, and the trend towards multi-polarization has increased noticeably.

In the area of disarmament, the United States and the Soviet Union have reached agreement in principle on the partial reduction of strategic nuclear weapons and have agreed to stop the production of chemical weapons and to start to reduce their stocks of such weapons. Agreement has been reached in negotiations on the reduction of conventional forces in Europe.

In the multilateral domain, headway has been made in disarmament efforts. Furthermore, in the case of some hot-spot problems and regional conflicts the parties have reached or are moving towards political settlement. In short, the international community has achieved initial, but commendable, results in its efforts to maintain world peace and security.

In the mean time, we cannot but note that there are still many political, economic and national contradictions in the world, that new forms of power politics continue to jeopardize international relations, and that tensions and complications

(Mr. Yu Mengjia, China)

have emerged in some regions. As many problems pertaining to international security have still to be resolved, our world in far from being tranquil. Many difficulties will have to be overcome before it is possible to achieve fair, reasonable and comprehensive political settlements for several regional conflicts, including that in the Middle East.

Recently, the situation in the Gulf region has become especially worrying. Iraq has not yet shown the political will to implement the relevant Security Council resolutions. It still refuses to withdraw its troops from Kuwait. In the mean time, several countries are continuing their massive military build-up in the region, and the danger of war is increasing rapidly.

Although its momentum has weakened, the international arms race has not come to a halt. Multilateral disarmament has not proceeded as was expected, and the process of disarmament is still being obstructed by the tendency to shift disarmament responsibility and to alter disarmament targets. The task of disarmament continues to be arduous.

The growth of the world economy and of world trade has continued to slow down. At the same time, long-latent factors of instability have increased. In particular, the economic situation of the developing countries continues to deteriorate, and serious economic-development imbalances between developed countries and developing countries, as well as the ever-growing polarisation between North and South, hamper the sustained and stable development of the world economy and, increasingly, constitute a key factor of disturbance that threatens world peace and security.

(Mr. Yu Mengjia, China)

The development of the world situation over the past year has shown that the relaxation between the United States and the Soviet Union and between the two big military alliances alone is not sufficient to ensure a lasting and universal peace. There still exist many factors of instability in our world today. At this crucial juncture when the old world pattern is being replaced by a new one, the need has become all the more urgent for the establishment of genuinely fair, reasonable and new political and economic order so as to ensure a solid foundation for a new global pattern of peace and security.

In the present situation of rapid changes, the first question people should answer is this: what kind of new political order should be established so that international peace and security can be preserved?

Post-war history has shown that super-Powers cannot dominate the world, neither can a few big and rich Powers manipulate world affairs. In the end an order based on military might, power politics, and threat or the use of force cannot be reliable. The bullying of the weak and small by the strong and powerful, and the trampling on the sovereignty of others can only cause conflicts and endanger regional and world peace and security. Such malpractices might succeed for a while, but eventually they will inevitably turn to the opposite of their intended direction and end in failure under the joint opposition of the people of the world.

What are endowed with genuine vitality are the five principles of mutual respect for each other's sovereignty and territorial integrity, mutual non-aggression, non-interference in each other's internal affairs, equality and mutual benefit, and peaceful coexistence, because these principles conform to the fundamental interests of all countries and of the entire human race. Not only would a new international political order based on these principles be in line with the basic norms of international relations and the purposes and principles of the

(Mr. Yu Mengjia, China)

United Nations Charter; it would also meet the needs of the time and the ardent aspirations of the people of all countries. We are of the view that such a new political order should include the following points: each country is entitled to choose its own political, economic and social system in accordance with its own national conditions; all countries, and especially the big Powers, must strictly abide by the principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of other countries; all countries should respect one another, seek common ground while putting aside their differences, live together in amity, treat each other as equals and carry on mutually beneficial co-operation; international disputes should be settled on a fair basis through peaceful means without resorting to threat or the use of force; and all countries, big or small, strong or weak, are entitled to take part in the discussion and management of world affairs on an equal footing. It is in keeping with these principles that China has firmly opposed the Iraqi invasion and occupation of Kuwait and made active efforts for a peaceful solution to the present grave Gulf crisis.

As a country in the Asia-Pacific region, China attaches great importance to the region's security, stability, peace and development. We hope that the countries that possess the largest military arsenals in the world will take the same practical and effective disarmament measures as have been taken elsewhere and stop their arms race in that region and work for the fair and reasonable settlement of regional conflicts and the removal of hot spots. Meanwhile, other countries of that region should also practise restraint and refrain from seeking armaments beyond their legitimate defence needs. In order to enhance peace and security in the Asia-Pacific region, efforts should be made starting from concrete issues to remove regional hot spots, properly handle bilateral relations on the basis of the five principles of peaceful coexistence, settle disputes through peaceful means and

(Mr. Yu Mengjia, China)

promote dialogue and contact. Countries concerned should, first and foremost, advance bilateral dialogue and consultation and take practical measures to increase mutual trust, reduce tension and eliminate conflicts, and then, building on that basis, establish and develop regional security arrangements step by step. That way is better suited to conditions in the Asia-Pacific region. For many years, and with this approach, China has made joint efforts with other Asia-Pacific countries. Meanwhile we are also willing to give positive consideration to all views and proposals which are conducive to improving the environment for peace and security in the Asia-Pacific region.

In order to maintain world peace and security, in addition to seeking the fair and reasonable settlement of regional conflicts and the removal of regional hot spots, the international community should continue its efforts to eliminate military and non-military threats to world peace and security.

In eliminating the military threat, efforts should be made to accelerate the disarmament process and check the arms race. In this regard we welcome the initial disarmament actions taken by the United States and the Soviet Union as well as the progress in European conventional disarmament. At the same time, it should be pointed out that the world armament situation has not undergone fundamental changes; the two super-Powers still possess the largest nuclear, conventional and chemical arsenals in the world. They should, as a matter of course, continue to make efforts, earnestly fulfil their special disarmament obligations, carry out serious negotiations, take the lead in disarmament actions and reach, at an early date, agreements which will facilitate the maintenance of world peace and security without prejudice to the security interests of other countries and regions. Their troops, thus cut, should be disbanded and portions of armaments reduced should be destroyed. None of them should be shifted to, or redeployed in, other regions. We

(Mr. Yu Mengjia, China)

also hope that the States participating in negotiations on European conventional disarmament will continue to make progress towards the realization of their agreed objectives at an early date.

In eliminating the non-military threat to world peace and security, the key is the establishment of an international economic order. Peace and security are inseparable from development. Without overcoming the difficulties faced by the developing countries in such fields as debt, trade, financial resources, money and credit, without changing the extremely vulnerable and weak status of the developing countries in the world economy, and without removing poverty and backwardness from the globe, it will be impossible to eliminate turbulence and instability in the world, and world peace and security will inevitably be adversely affected. At this historic moment when the world situation is witnessing fundamental changes and a new global pattern is taking shape, the international community must earnestly consider how to establish, step by step, a new and fair international economic order with a view to fundamentally changing the vulnerable and dismal status of the developing countries so as to enable them to restore as soon as possible their growth and development, and narrowing the gap between the North and the South, thus strengthening world peace, security and development.

(Mr. Yu Mengjia, China)

We are glad to note that over the past year the United Nations has continued its active role in maintaining world peace and security and settling some urgent problems confronting mankind. This world Organization has also made tireless efforts and achieved commendable results in promoting regional peace processes and the political settlement of regional conflicts. In the present critical and complex world situation the international community expects to see a further strengthening of the role of the United Nations. We hold that in order to guarantee world peace and security all countries, and the five permanent members of the Security Council in particular, should abide by the purposes and principles of the Charter, and handle State-to-State relations in strict accordance with the Five Principles of Peaceful Co-existence. Together with all other Member States, China is willing to fulfil its obligations and strive for the strengthening of the United Nations role in maintaining world peace and security and for the establishment of fair, reasonable and new international political and economic orders.

Mr. KOTEVSKI (Yugoslavia): I shall confine my delegation's statement to the question of the Mediterranean and the strengthening of security and co-operation in this region, which is of exceptional importance for Yugoslavia. Situated along the northern coast of the Adriatic, Yugoslavia depends on the Mediterranean for its outlet into the larger world, and is therefore very interested in having this region of ancient and modern routes, cultures and civilizations become an area of peace and co-operation.

On the basis of this interest, Yugoslavia is a staunch supporter of equitable and comprehensive co-operation and dialogue with all Mediterranean countries, as well as with other factors outside this region, to bring about easing of tensions, peaceful solutions to crises in some parts of the Mediterranean and the strengthening of security, confidence and co-operation between its peoples and countries.

(Mr. Kotevski, Yugoslavia)

In that context, we believe that the positive changes in international relations and new trends in Europe will be reflected in a positive way on the Mediterranean as well. There is no denying that broader processes, like those in Europe, and developments in the Mediterranean are very closely connected and that they influence one another. This is particularly true of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE) process, which has taken firm root in Europe as it rededicates itself to the pursuit of universal interests of mankind as the basis of general progress. Yugoslavia has been an active participant in this process ever since its beginning, and we welcome all efforts, European or regional, conducive to the further strengthening of the process of security, co-operation and confidence in the Mediterranean region.

In this context, we consider the meeting in Palma de Majorca, which, apart from all States participating in the CSCE, was attended by non-participating Mediterranean countries, as very useful and conducive to the strengthening of confidence, co-operation and security in the region. Along these lines also is the initiative of Italy and Spain on the convening of a conference on security and co-operation in the Mediterranean, inspired by the experience of the CSCE process, which is also supported by some other Western European Mediterranean countries. In the opinion of my delegation, it provides a useful link between the processes in Europe and the current needs of the Mediterranean. Bearing that in mind, we trust that the Mediterranean reflects in the best possible way the degree of Europe's openness towards the world and its readiness for dialogue and co-operation with non-European countries.

A further contribution to the strengthening of co-operation and security in the Mediterranean is provided by various forms of subregional relations between

(Mr. Kotevski, Yugoslavia)

Mediterranean States, such as Black Sea co-operation, the Maghreb and Adriatic initiatives, Balkan co-operation and the co-operation of Western countries of the Mediterranean.

I wish to make particular mention of the activities of the Mediterranean non-aligned countries and their contribution to the strengthening of co-operation and security in the region. Last June they held their Third Ministerial Conference in Algiers, and in the Declaration resulting from it they reiterated their firm belief that

> "security and co-operation in the Mediterranean and in Europe are closely linked and interdependent" (A/45/357, annex I, para. 1)

and that

> "an open and sustained dialogue as well as an intensive co-operation would increase mutual understanding and trust, thus promoting stability, security and peace in the region." (ibid., para. 4 (a))

The Algiers Declaration reflects the clearly expressed interest of these countries in the broadest possible co-operation with Europe, as well as an added impulse to the link between Europe and North Africa.

On that occasion the non-aligned countries of the Mediterranean supported the convening of the conference on security and co-operation in the Mediterranean. Although convinced that the problems of this region and the development of the process of co-operation cannot be solved without participation by littoral States, the non-aligned countries expressed their readiness to act jointly with other countries outside the region that have obvious interests in it and that therefore should participate in promoting that process.

Despite all the positive processes, crises and conflicts have not bypassed the Mediterranean. The developments in the Near and Middle East have once again thrown

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into focus the Middle East problem, at the core of which is the problem of Palestine, the root cause of all other problems, whether political, economic or humanitarian. Additional efforts are needed to bring about a peaceful solution to this crisis. We believe that the Mediterranean concept is one of the avenues worth exploring. With it in place, awareness of the need to address this long-standing problem in all its complexity would certainly increase.

Another problem in the area that gives us much reason for concern is the lack of progress towards a solution of the Cyprus crisis, despite the Secretary-General's efforts. We sincerely hope, however, that the ongoing changes in international relations will facilitate the search for solutions to this and other crises and conflicts in the region.

Let me point out that, in addition to the region's political and security significance, its economic aspect is also very important. There is every reason to believe that it will only increase after 1992 with the establishment of a single market in Europe. Since several countries of the European Community are Mediterranean, and maintain fruitful co-operation and diversified relations with other Mediterranean non-Community States, my delegation is of the opinion that ever greater attention should be devoted to promoting co-operation and relations between them in the days to come. This is all the more important if we want to address the increasing problems of the economic development of some of the countries in the region, which is lagging behind that in Europe, a trend that is not likely to be reversed if left unattended.

Environment in the Mediterranean should also be a matter of urgent concern. The Mediterranean is one of the most polluted seas and to clean it collective efforts will be needed, and not by Mediterranean countries alone.

(Mr. Kotevski, Yugoslavia)

In conclusion, I should like to stress the belief of my delegation that events in the Mediterranean will lead to the realization of a new concept of security and co-operation, based on the equality of all its States, and will reflect positively on developments elsewhere in the world as well.

The CHAIRMAN: I now call on the Under-Secretary-General for Political and Security Council Affairs, Mr. Vasiliy Safronchuk.

Mr. SAFRONCHUK (Under-Secretary-General for Political and Security Council Affairs): I should like first to express my sincere appreciation for being given the opportunity to address the Committee on the items related to international security.

This year the First Committee's work is unfolding in a changed global political landscape, which creates more favourable ground for approaching security issues with a new perspective.

(Mr. Safronchuk)

The transition from confrontation to dialogue, co-operation and partnership, the revolutionary changes in Central and Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union, the newly emerged stage in Europe's integration as reflected in the recent decisions taken at the summit Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE) in Paris, the slowing down of the arms race and the progress achieved in the disarmament area, and the resolution of some regional conflicts have been cited here as accomplishments that signalled the end of the cold war and the beginning of the new post-confrontational era. The United Nations entered this era as the central vital mechanism of concerted international action.

Many members of the Committee, however, have emphasized that the present international situation did not become an irreversible trend and that its benefits were not automatic, since some factors still threatened the security of nations. This was confirmed by the recent events in the Gulf. The swift, prompt and united action taken by the Security Council to resolve this crisis by political means was highly praised by Member States as a vivid demonstration of the growing role of the United Nations in the modern world.

Many delegations have emphasized the need for renewed political will and for long-term thinking that is not overwhelmed by old perceptions and habits in the process of shaping the new concept of security. In this regard, it was repeatedly underscored that a broad concept of security encompassing all its aspects, which has begun to emerge as a result of the end of the cold war, was necessary if the new opportunities were to be realized. Members observed that a concerted response to the challenges posed by the need for more equitable economic relations, the protection of the environment and efforts to address the world's social and humanitarian problems, together with the continued reduction of the level of armaments and armed forces, constituted vital imperatives of the new system of

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security. The collective security framework of the United Nations set forth in its Charter was seen as the fundamental ingredient in the overall efforts of States in shaping their security needs in the present environment.

These challenges and concerns are confronting this Committee now, when it is considering issues of international security. As members are fully aware, this year the Committee has on its agenda five items relating to international security. One of them - namely, "Implementation of the Declaration of the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace" - has already been considered and action has been taken upon it. We hope that consideration of the item entitled "Question of Antarctica" will be completed on Wednesday. I wish to take this opportunity to highlight the constructive attitude displayed by the members of this Committee in addressing these important issues, thus responding to the new requirements at this time for dialogue and understanding.

Another item for consideration is "Strengthening of security and co-operation in the Mediterranean region", an important issue that has remained on the agenda since the thirty-sixth session in 1981. Pursuant to resolution 44/125, adopted at the last session, the Secretary-General has submitted his report, contained in document A/45/713. It contains ideas and suggestions from Member States and international organizations with regard to their potential contribution to strengthening peace, security and co-operation in that region. In some replies it was stressed that the outbreak of the crisis in the Gulf demonstrated that the settlement of potential disputes in the Mediterranean and adjacent regions was a priority for the international community.

I anticipate that the consideration of this item will take place in the light of the present reality in the world and in the region. I would like to mention that two important meetings of direct relevance to the security of the

(Mr. Safronchuk)

Mediterranean region took place in the course of this year. The Algiers meeting of the non-aligned countries of that region and the meeting at Palma de Mallorca of the countries of the region participating in the CSCE process. Important decisions were taken at both meetings, and it goes without saying that their outcome would help our endeavours to bring into new focus the preoccupation of States regarding this region with the aim of finding solutions to the complex issues in the Mediterranean area, including the Middle East. Undoubtedly, the new, positive changes occurring in Europe would have a salutary effect on the Mediterranean region as well. Accordingly, I hope that your deliberations will contribute to the stability and security of this zone, where there are many opportunities for co-operation in many fields.

Another issue the First Committee has dealt with for quite a considerable time - since 1969 to be exact - is the item entitled "Review of the implementation of the Declaration on the Strengthening of International Security". It will be recalled that at the forty-fourth session the General Assembly, in keeping with its previous practice, invited Member States to submit their views and comments on the question of the implementation of the Declaration. Consequently, a report of the Secretary-General, contained in document A/45/516 and Add.1, was submitted for your consideration. You will observe that Member States emphasized the renewed significance of this Declaration in the context of the post-confrontation era that is now evolving.

Finally, another item that the Committee will consider this year is item 70, entitled "Implementation of the Declaration on the Preparation of Societies for Life in Peace". A report of the Secretary-General on this issue, contained in document A/45/575, contains the replies of 10 Member States and two organizations of the United Nations system on the implementation of the Declaration, which was

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adopted by the General Assembly in 1978. From the comments made by Member States on this matter, it is evident that a healthy trend is emerging in many countries towards strengthening the process of democratization, dialogue and co-operation in resolving pending problems. Such an effort was seen as consciously promoted through education, and the protection and promotion of human rights and fundamental freedoms. The rule of law and the prevalence of tolerance and social equality were recognized as essential ingredients for life in peace. The democratization of societies was considered an important factor in enabling ordinary citizens to play an important role in promoting peace. The revitalization of the United Nations as the central peace-making forum was regarded as an increasingly sought-after objective by all States regardless of their size or power. The report of the Secretary-General also provides a summary of relevant activities of the United Nations and of some of its specialized agencies in this field.

(Mr. Safronchuk)

The building of peace and creation of conditions of stability in today's world requires innovative responses to security challenges of a radically different nature from those encountered in the past. This appears to be the main objective of this session and of the future activities of the First Committee. The results that will be recorded of its deliberations will largely depend on how Member States will be able, for all their diverse and at times contradictory interests, to show political will and a new thinking pertaining to the vital need for security of all countries. Obviously, there are many difficult and complex matters to be resolved in the area of international security, but with realism and pragmatism, solutions can be found in conformity with and in the spirit of the new challenges of the present world.

The termination of the cold war offers many opportunities to build a more peaceful world. It appears important that serious thought be given to the question whether the role and functions of the United Nations in maintaining peace and security are fully suited to the evolving international order. The Department of Political and Security Council Affairs would, if Member States so wish, stand ready and lend any assistance that might be required by the Committee in the implementation of its decisions regarding the achievement of a more secure world.

At this turning point in history, it is essential that full use be made by the international community of existing opportunities in fulfilling the obligations set out in the Charter.

ORGANIZATION OF WORK

The CHAIRMAN: I wish to remind members that, in conformity with the Committee's programme of work and timetable, the deadline for the submission of draft resolutions under agenda items 68, 69 and 70 is Tuesday, 27 November, at 6 p.m. I urge delegations to co-operate by observing that deadline.

(The Chairman)

I would also like to remind delegations that the list of speakers for the general debate on international security agenda items will be closed today at 6 p.m. In order to make full use of the time allocated for the consideration of those items, I request members to put their names on the list of speakers as soon as possible.

I have been informed that the test of draft resolution A/C.1/45/L.64/Rev.1 will be available in the delegation's distribution booth after 3 p.m. today.

The meeting rose at 12.35 p.m.